



Nu you

An introductory booklet



NUCALA 
mepolizumab

This booklet is intended for patients who have been prescribed Nucala.
For further information, please refer to Nucala patient website.

www.severeasthma.co.nz

Introduction

Can you remember the first time you heard the words “severe asthma”?

Whether it was last week or last year, it's likely to have been a turning point in your asthma treatment journey. That's because once asthma becomes severe, your previously prescribed treatments may not be enough to control it anymore.

It becomes harder to keep enjoying the things you've always loved to do.

Why have I been prescribed Nucala?

You might have found that symptoms such as wheezing, breathlessness, chest tightness and coughing were harder to control. Or that you were having asthma attacks, even with high doses of your existing treatments.

Now your specialist has prescribed Nucala for you. It isn't an inhaler or a steroid – it's a type of medication called a 'biologic'.

And hopefully it's a positive step towards getting your asthma under control.

How do biologics like Nucala treat severe asthma?

There are different types of severe asthma. This booklet is focused on severe eosinophilic asthma (SEA). The inflammation in SEA can be triggered by eosinophils, which are a type of white blood cell.

Eosinophils have an important role in helping your body fight off infections. But for some people, too many eosinophils leads to eosinophil-induced inflammation, which can mean a greater risk of an asthma attack.

That's where biologics like Nucala come in: they reduce the number of eosinophils in the blood and reduce eosinophil-induced inflammation. Nucala is taken in addition to other asthma medication. Patients who see a benefit can have a lower risk of asthma attacks – and have seen their symptoms improve.



Normal lungs

Normal eosinophil function
No inflammation



Severe asthma

Eosinophils and other immune system cells cause inflammation
Increased risk of an asthma attack



Biologic treatment with Nucala

Reduces the number of eosinophils, reducing eosinophil-induced inflammation
Decreased risk of an asthma attack

So how can Nucala help?

It can treat the inflammation causing your symptoms

Nucala can help reduce the number of eosinophils in your blood, thereby reducing the inflammation they cause.

It can treat your symptoms

Nucala can help treat your symptoms as well as reduce your number of asthma attacks. If you are taking oral steroids, Nucala can also help reduce the daily dose you need to control your asthma. Nucala can positively impact:



Asthma attacks



Daily dose of oral steroids needed to control asthma



Health-related quality of life



Lung function


It can keep both at bay

Nucala is an ongoing treatment: to keep getting the benefits, you have to keep taking Nucala – even if you start to feel better.

It can take time to see improvements. If you don't see benefits right away, keep taking your Nucala as directed by your doctor.

Some people get asthma-related side effects, or their asthma may become worse during treatment with Nucala. Tell your doctor or nurse if your asthma remains uncontrolled (or gets worse) after you start Nucala treatment.

Remember: it's important that you report any side effects you get to your doctor, nurse or pharmacist. See the back page for more information.



How do I take Nucala?

Many asthma medications are inhaled or taken by mouth, but Nucala is a bit different.

Nucala is given by your health care provider as an injection, just under the skin (subcutaneous injection) rather than through an inhaler or a tablet.

This booklet is here to help give you the information and encouragement you need to boost your confidence – as is the support you'll receive from your doctor.

What are the possible side effects?

Like all medicines, Nucala can cause side effects, although not everybody gets them.

Do not be alarmed by the following list of side effects. You may not experience any of them. A very common side effect, which may affect more than 1 in 10 people, is headache. Common side effects, which may affect up to one in ten people, include injection-site reaction (pain, redness, swelling, itching, and burning sensation of the skin near where the injection was given), eczema (itchy red patches on the skin), back pain, pharyngitis (sore throat), lower respiratory tract infection (congestion, cough, discomfort), nasal congestion (stuffy nose), upper abdominal pain (stomach pain or discomfort in the upper area of the stomach), urinary tract infection (blood in urine, painful and frequent urination, fever, pain in lower back) , fever (high temperature).

Note that this is not a complete list of side effects, please refer to the Consumer Medicine Information for more details (available from www.medsafe.govt.nz).



Where can I find out more

The following websites may be useful for additional information:

NUCALA PATIENT WEBSITE

www.severeasthma.co.nz

ASTHMA NEW ZEALAND

www.asthma.org.nz

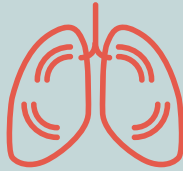
NZ ASTHMA AND RESPIRATORY FOUNDATION

www.asthmafoundation.org.nz

HEALTH NAVIGATOR NZ

www.healthnavigator.org.nz





References:

1. Nucala (mepolizumab) Consumer Medicine Information, GSK New Zealand, Accessed Dec 2019.
2. Nucala (mepolizumab) Medsafe Data Sheet, GSK New Zealand, Accessed Dec 2019.

Nucala (mepolizumab 100mg) is a **Prescription Medicine**. *Nucala* is used as an add-on treatment for severe refractory eosinophilic asthma in patients 12 years and over. *Nucala* is also used as an add-on treatment for relapsing or refractory Eosinophilic Granulomatosis with Polyangiitis (EGPA) in adult patients 18 years and older. *Nucala* is given as one subcutaneous injection every four weeks.

Nucala is a fully funded medicine; Special Authority criteria apply. Use strictly as directed.

Nucala has risks and benefits. Tell your doctor if: you are taking oral or inhaled corticosteroid medicines (**Do not stop taking your other asthma medicines**, including your corticosteroid medicines, unless instructed by your healthcare provider because this may cause other symptoms to come back); you have a parasitic (helminth) infection; you are taking prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements; you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant (it is not known if *Nucala* may harm your unborn baby); you are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed.

Your doctor will consider the benefit to you and the risk to you or your baby of using *Nucala* while you are pregnant. *Nucala* does not treat acute asthma symptoms, such as sudden asthma attack.

Therefore, *Nucala* should not be used to treat sudden breathing problems. Tell your healthcare professional or get emergency help right away if you have any of the following symptoms of an allergic reaction: swelling of your face, mouth, and tongue, breathing problems, fainting, dizziness, feeling light-headed (low blood pressure), rash or hives.

Side effects: headache, injection site reactions (pain, redness, swelling, itching, or a burning feeling at the injection site), back pain, and weakness (fatigue). Serious side effects may include allergic (hypersensitivity) reactions, including anaphylaxis. Serious allergic reactions can happen after you get your injection of *Nucala*. Allergic reactions can sometimes happen hours or days after you get a dose of *Nucala*.

Herpes zoster infections that can cause shingles have happened in people who received *Nucala*. **If symptoms continue or you have side effects, see your doctor, pharmacist or health care professional.**

For more information, see *Nucala* Consumer Medicine Information at www.medsafe.govt.nz. Normal doctor's charges apply. Ask your doctor if *Nucala* is right for you. *Nucala* is a registered trade mark of the GlaxoSmithKline group of companies. Marketed by GlaxoSmithKline NZ Limited, Auckland.

Adverse events involving GlaxoSmithKline products should be reported to GSK Medical Information on 0800 808 500.

Information on 0800 808 500.

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